



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

September 14, 2010

Mr. Eric Buermann
Chair, Governing Board
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road, M.S. 2114
West Palm Beach, Florida 33416-4680

Dear Mr. Buermann:

In accordance with Section 373.536, Florida Statutes, I have reviewed and hereby approve the South Florida Water Management District's annual budget for Fiscal Year 2010-11. During the past year, water management districts have continued to work diligently to reduce spending where possible and to use taxpayer dollars efficiently. As you know, this is an ongoing process, and as the state continues to address budget shortfalls, we will continue to work with you to identify potential savings in your programs that could reduce current or future state appropriations.

I again applaud efforts by your Governing Board to hold property taxes constant for three years in a row, even though this has resulted in a decrease in district revenues. This means property taxes levied by the South Florida Water Management District have been maintained for four consecutive years.

In the last few budget cycles, your district has experienced significant reductions in revenue from many sources. Ad valorem sources, state and federal appropriations, and contributions from local government partners have all fallen. Despite this, the district continues to manage employee compensation at current levels, and to find ways to trim costs even in the face of many of the same program challenges.

I commend you and the Governing Board for demonstrating a commitment to the environment and fiscal responsibility, and thank you for your leadership during these challenging times. I also congratulate your staff for the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, received for the 18th consecutive year from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada, for the district's Fiscal Year 2009-10 annual budget presentation.

Additionally, I applaud your progress in implementing the modified strategy for phased acquisition of lands owned by the U.S. Sugar Corporation. Your district continues to approach the core issues of the acquisition with a strong spirit of cooperation with stakeholders and cognizance of economic realities. Your efforts provide Floridians with unique opportunities to increase water storage and treatment to revive, restore, and preserve Lake Okeechobee, Florida's coastal estuaries and the Greater Everglades ecosystem.

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I also commend you for maintaining prior-year program priorities with continued funding for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects, as well as critical non-CERP projects. It is also important that funding is continued for the Lake Okeechobee Protection Plan, Kissimmee River restoration, the land acquisition components of the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation, the district's extensive water control infrastructure, and the implementation of the Indian River and Caloosahatchee River Estuary Protection plans.

As a Floridian, I appreciate the great work and accomplishments achieved by the South Florida Water Management District in its efforts to protect Florida's wonderful natural resources for the benefit of our visitors, businesses, residents, and the environment. I look forward to working with you in the future as water management districts continue to provide critical services to the people of Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charlie Crist", is written over a faint, larger blue ink signature that is partially obscured. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charlie Crist

Cc: Carol Wehle, Executive Director
Secretary Mimi Drew, Department of Environmental Protection